

THE
OCCASIONAL PAPER.

VOL. H. NUMB. XII.



Pride of AUTHORS.

*Proud and haughty, Scornful is his Name, who deal-
eth in proud Wrath. (Heb.) In the Wrath of Pride.
Prov. XXI. v. 24.*



L O N D O N:

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A N
E S S A Y

O N T H E
Pride of **AUTHORS.**



N O T H I N G is more amiable than Modesty. It entitles to universal Regard. It brightens every other Excellence, and makes all Imperfections pardonable: It raises in Mankind the most friendly Disposition to all whom they see possessed of it: And, above most other things, qualifies a Man both to give, and to receive, Entertainment and Instruction. For these Reasons it has been ever esteem'd the most recommending Quality in Conversation.

And these Things, which make an humble Man so agreeable and useful a Companion, should be sufficient to make every Author, who designs either the Satisfaction or Improvement of those that read him, solicitous to guard against every Degree of Insolence, every Expression and Mark of an haughty Mind. And accordingly it has been an usual Method, a prevailing Stratagem with most Writers, to put on an Air of Modesty; and either in the Beginning, or the Close of their Work, to disclaim all selfish Views and conceited Thoughts of their own Merit. It is true, these lowly Professions are often accompany'd with such plain Marks of Self-Esteem as to destroy their own Credit: An Author can't reasonably expect, nor does he always desire to be believ'd, when he says, *His Adversary has said more Good of him than he deserves* (a); or when he seems to allow himself to be a *weak, ignorant Writer* (b): One who thro' Ignorance, tho' with no Design of Calumny, might misrepresent the Sense of plain Words. This is so far from being the Effect of Humility, that it is a peculiar and very successful Art of Ostentation; which the late Earl of *Shaftsbury* in his *Advice to an Author* (c) rallies upon with great Justness and Humour. 'There appears, says he, such a peculiar Grace and Ingenuity in the Method of confessing Laziness, Precipitancy, Carelessness, or whatever other Vices have been the Occasion of the Author's Deficiency, that it would seem a pity 'had the Work itself been brought to such a Perfection as to have left no room for the penitent

(a) *The Condition and Example of our Sav. Vindicated*, p. 50.

(b) P. 62. Ibid.

(c) P. 171.

PRIDE of AUTHORS.

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nitent Party to enlarge on his Demerits. Now this does very well in a Corollary or winding up; it ends pathetically, and the Reader doubtless will be ready on these Terms to give Absolution to a confessing Author for those Faults which he chuses rather to excuse than amend. This artful Endeavour to palliate it, does, among Men of Judgment, but very imperfectly secure from that Offence which is justly taken at that Delight in himself, and inordinate Value for his own Performances, so frequently to be met with in an Author.

Now since this is an Evil, to which they who send their Thoughts abroad into the World, are so generally liable; since the Tendency of it is so unhappy, as that even Reason and good Sense themselves must suffer, and appear less agreeable, when propos'd with Pride and Scorn; it is worth while to consider a little distinctly the Causes from which it may proceed. And upon Enquiry we shall find, that such is the Make of our Minds, that an imaginary, as well as real, Excellence is apt to fill us with this Vanity and Conceit. And whatever is apt to make Men expect great Defe-
rence and Regard from those with whom they converse, will tempt an Author to consider himself as superior to most that read him, and to all that write against him.

An honourable Family; a Descent from Ancestors in any Respect famous, especially if considerable for their Learning; Great Titles, Marks of Eminence and Distinction; Great Estates, whether deriv'd from others, or of our own acquiring; bearing a public Character; representing a Body of Men either generally esteem'd or fear'd; a good Measure of Popularity; a Reputation
pretty

pretty well establish'd, as far as it has reach'd in the World; a distinct and thorough Knowledge of the Subject treated on, a good strong and clear Way of Reasoning, Great Reading, A Beauty of Style, An acceptable Manner of expressing his Sentiments; An Art of seeming to write to the Purpose, appearing to be in Earnest, and yet hiding a Man's real Thoughts, and keeping clear of every Difficulty thrown in his Way; These, and such like things, are ready to give an Author a very good Opinion of himself.

A Man, conscious to himself that he has one, or more, of these Advantages above other Men, is in Danger of growing Arrogant and Conceited. Few Writers have all these, in any Degree of Eminence, together. Some of them are more considerable Perfections and Advantages, than others. One of them at least, (the Colouring Art) is rather Ground of Shame than Glory.

Many fancy themselves possess'd of more of those Excellencies, and in an higher Measure, than more impartial Judges can see they have any Reason for. But were every thing of this Nature really to meet in an Author, in an envy'd Degree, 'tis very possible he may so far overvalue himself upon the Account of them, as to render what he writes less acceptable and useful.

I have been led into this Way of thinking, by observing that which, I dare say, has escap'd no attentive Reader's Notice; The uncommon Air of Distance and Superiority the Dean of *Chichester* has put on, in his late Controversial Writings. There is no Man, it seems, good and great enough to say any thing contrary to his Sentiments,

Sentiments; or so much as to put him in Mind of his own Opinions. 'Tis an unpardonable Presumption in any Man, either to answer, or censure, what He has thought fit to publish. I cannot pretend to say, whether this be *Vitium Naturæ*, or *Animæ*; but that it is *Vitium* of some kind or other, I am very sure: And since this worthy Person himself will not Say, every Body seems at Liberty to guess, on what he founds all this self Esteem.

For my Part, I would not willingly overlook any one thing, that may help to make him appear so very great and considerable in his own Eyes.

I readily acknowledge, that his good Father, the late Dean of St. Paul's made, for a considerable Time, no contemptible Figure in the Learned World: He has left behind him, Works, which, if I mistake not, will long endear his Memory to all that believe a Providence and a World to come, and have any Regard to the Practice of Virtue, under the Belief of a future Judgment and Retributions. But nothing of this Kind is needed to raise and spread the Reputation of the Son; *Non Genus & Proavos*. The Dean of Chichester does not care to hear his Father's Name mention'd, tho' in the most courteous and obliging Manner (a). 'Tis the least thing of a thousand to him, whether the Clamour against him, and the design'd Censure of him, by a Convocation, was *Right* and well grounded; or whether it was only for explaining and vindicating a Doctrine of the Church, in the Integrity,

(a) *Confid.* p. 62. 63.

*Integrity, as well as Zeal of his Heart (a). An Egre-
gious Instance of that Heathen Virtue, Pietas
erga Patrem.*

But his Titles, his Dignities and Preferments
seem to weigh more with him. These he regards
among the Things *Qua fecimus ipsi*. As being the
immediate Fruit, and the hardly sufficient Re-
ward, of his personal Merit; And Entitling to the
same Priviledges which a raised Station, and a
plentiful Fortune, are wont to give Men in Con-
versation. Upon the Foot of these Advantages,
he Demands to be read with uncommon Defer-
ence and Respect; and without any Contradic-
tion from all who cannot be supposed to have so
much Sense and Knowledge, as he has, by some
Thousands of Pounds. Must not he be very in-
solent and ill-bred who shall presume with half
his Estate, to convince a Man of his Substance and
Figure of any Contradiction or Mistake? With-
out any Concern to answer what is wrote,
'tis hard if a wealthy (b) Dean may not leave
it to the World to judge, whether a Man ought
to be supposed to have any Proportion of his
Capacity and Judgment, who has not a fifth Part
of his Dignity and Preferment.

But as great as he thus becomes in himself, he
would think it an Injury should his Readers con-
sider him merely as a private Person. He will
be regarded as writing in *Vindication* of a *Consti-
tution*, and so appears with the Authority of a
whole Church. Surely a Member of a Committee
of Convocation, when an Author in their behalf,
may give himself out to be consider'd as that Com-
mittee,

(a) *Bang. P. S. to Sykes. p. 92.*

(b) *Conf. p. 66. 67.*

mittee, and that Committee as the *Convocation*, and the Convocation as *the Clergy of the Nation*. And a Reader must be very uncourteous, that does not regard the high Merit, collected together and summed up, by this Political Arithmetick, in one Person. None of those who peruse him, can sure, with any Modesty, think otherwise than he will allow; or appear to oppose him with any Decency, when they are to know, that if they shall be so hardy as to do so, they must of Course be *Enemies to the Church*. And whatever they say, if it has any Weight of Argument in it especially, must be bitter *Insinuations* against the *Clergy*. What a Gentleman of such Consideration as this, is pleased to make publick, should, it is supposed, *stop the Mouths of the Enemies of the Constitution* (a). And if it should not; but there should be found some, who, notwithstanding, should still think, and crave Leave to let the World know why they think differently; sure a Person of such accumulated Merit may have the Priviledge of declaring, without being charg'd with *Pride* or *Arrrgance*, that *he shall not value them* (b).

The *Dean* seems sensible, that by his accurate Preaching, and what he had already publish'd, he had obtain'd a very desirable Measure of Esteem among competent Judges. And he had both Reason and Inclination, to value himself more on the good Opinion another venerable Body of Men heretofore had of him,, than on the Regard shewn him by the whole Convoca-

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tion.

(a) *Vindic. of Corpor. and Test Act's Preface.*

(b) *Ibid.*

tion. This, his partial Friends and fond Admirers have made so unhappy an Use of, as to insinuate, that he need but write like himself to *outshine* every Body else. And is the Justice, or Exactness, of their Opinions to be call'd in question, or suspended? If the Publick has any Manners, it is expected it will conform to the Sense and the Approbation of the most Knowing and Judicious. The Credit of great Weight and Ability among Men celebrated for Wisdom, should entitle to universal Esteem. The whole World must offer the same Incense to him, which they see others do, or they will betray their own Ignorance, false Taste, and wrong Judgment; which will make them rather the Objects of Pity and Scorn, than of Regard.

But notwithstanding what may be said against the *Dean*, it must be own'd, that he generally commands a clear and a grateful *Style*. This is a very great Happiness in an Author, to be able to express his Sentiments in an agreeable Manner; and 'tis what Men are as apt inordinately to value themselves upon, as any one Qualification whatever. They who know themselves to be Masters herein, are frequently tempted to write on Subjects, where nothing can support them but a peculiar Elegancy, which they fancy must recommend all they say. And hence it comes to pass, that upon the least Variation of the *Manner of Expression*, those Things which seem to *serve* a Cause, shall be turn'd quite *against* it. The fine and handsome Passages which a Man may think mighty Embellishments to his own Arguments, shall be apply'd with more Truth, and consequently used with much more Effect, on the other Side.

Side. Nay, sometimes an Author shall grow so vain and proud of his own Manner of Writing, as to think himself capable of giving the fairest Colours to the foulest Errors, or the worst of Causes. A Consciousness of an happy Talent this Way, has drawn in many others, as well as helped to draw in the *Dean of Chichester*, to plead for one of the worst Things in the World, *Persecution*; and to throw Contempt upon one of the best Things in the World, *Protestant and English Liberty*. He knows that his Style is one of the best in the present Age: And therefore, tho' he should fill a Book with Falshood and Misrepresentations, he doubts not its passing well in the World. Tho' his *Quotations*, may be proved to be meer Calumnies; His Narrative and Historical Accounts (*v. g.*) of the *Incapacitating Laws relating to the Dissenters*, may be proved no better than a finely contrived Story of his own dressing up; and tho' all his Arguments must therefore of Course be fallacious; yet he trusts to their Dress, and hopes That alone will be sufficient to recommend every Thing he thinks fit to write.

The Things on which an Author may most justly value himself, are, a thorough and distinct Knowledge of the Subject on which he writes, and a Capacity and Inclination to reason justly and strongly upon it. There is no conceivable Case, in which a Man assumes to himself, with so little Offence as in this: But then it must be added too, there is no Writer so little likely to do so, as one of this kind: For the same fine Talents that make him excell, do at the same Time list him above that Weakness of Pride: The same Justness

of Understanding that makes an Author write a great many good Things, makes him afraid they are hardly good enough to be read. When a Man of a moderate Understanding thinks he writes divinely; a Man of a truly great Genius sometimes thinks he writes tolerably well, and is pleas'd that he should have the good Fortune to entertain and profit the World. It is not so usual for a Man to pride himself in Writing well, as in making a Shew and an Appearance only of Writing to the Purpose. Real and great Merit seldom makes Men conceited in their Opinions of themselves, or arrogant in their Carriage to others: But little Arts, plausible Colours, and cunning Disguises, are almost as inconsistent with Modesty, as they are with Integrity.

For all that appears to disinterested and impartial Judges, Mr. Sykes (not to say the Bishop of *Bangor*) knows full as much concerning the Subject of which he pretended to treat, as the *Dean* does of any of those Affairs in which he gives himself out to be so thoroughly vers'd.

I don't believe that any Body, who has seen what has been (a) reply'd to it, will imagine that he thoroughly understood, or fairly represented, the Nature and Design of those Acts he pretended to vindicate; whatever Confidence his Post in the *Temple* might give him, or his Sufficiency to state a Point in Law. But what then? He is very sensible, that the Cause
he

(a) Pref. to the Princip. of an Occas. Conf. and Lowman's Defence of the Dissenters.

he has to manage is extreamly Popular ; what the Generality of the People of this Land are at present strongly dispos'd and inclined to believe, on little or no Evidence : He knows that he has a very handsom and taking Way of telling this agreeable Story ; and what need has he to fear their Answers, or Confutations ? Every Principle much in Vogue, he catches at all Opportunities of mentioning, vindicating, and dilating upon. *In these Particulars* (to borrow his own Words, with much less Justice apply'd by him to his Lordship) *he speaks out ; However he has with more than Christian Prudence avoided declaring his Opinion in many Things laid to his Charge ;* and which he had undertaken, and publickly obliged himself to defend and make good.

And here I can't but observe, a pretty little Art this great Writer has, of wording even a Title Page, so as to prejudice a Reader in his Favour, or raise a groundless Odium in those who shall venture to oppose him. Among other things, in his Answer to the Representation of the Committee, the Bishop of *Bangor* had wrote excellently well in behalf of the great End and Design for which the *Corporation and Test Acts* were made ; viz. The keeping out Popery, and securing the Protestant Religion ; and uniting Protestants upon the true Principles of that Religion, so as that Popery may never more return among us. In a little Time out comes something design'd by way of an Answer in a Paper bearing this Title, *A Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, in answer to the Bishop of Bangor's Reasons for the Repeal of them : That*
is,

is, a Vindication of them against the Ends for which they were made: For the great Ends for which they are made, are of the Reasons urged by the Bishop of *Bangor*, and are indeed now become the just and sufficient Reasons for which they should be repeal'd. Besides, by such a Title as this, the Book is secur'd from an Answer from any Hand that would dread (as who does not dread) being esteem'd an ill Churchman; and is sure of the Applause of all the true steady Friends to the Church, whether they read any farther than the Title Page, or no.

But he has improv'd and refin'd upon this Answer in his last Pamphlet; and with a dissingenuous Artfulness, beyond what I ever remember to have met with in any Writer of Controversy, he has chose a Title, against which it would be look'd upon as prophane and unchristian to write: *The Condition and Example of our blessed Saviour vindicated, in answer to the Bishop of B——r, &c.* What! say the Common People presently, does this Bishop of *Bangor* impugn the *Condition and Example of our blessed Saviour* too? That's the Insinuation. When alas! the good Bishop is himself a lovely Copy of Christ's Example, and the best Defender of Christ's Authority, one of them, in the World. However, catching a Title that thus unavoidably throws an Odium on the Opponent, is like gaining the Weather-Gage in a Sea-Fight; the Fleet that is to the Leeward is sure to have all the Smoak of both Firings in their Face: For who dares write against a Pamphlet whose Title is, *A Vindication of Christ's Example, &c.*?

These

These are some, if not all the Advantages which the *Dean* brought with him into this Controversy. He values himself, more than a little, in some or all of these; and is so big with them, He can hardly forbear, in every Page, to make his Reader sensible that he stands upon rising Ground. He does not indeed, in express Words, say, what I cannot, without great and grievous Offence, hear even my Lord *Bacon* himself say concerning his Works; that *He conceives they may last as long as Books last* (a). Nor with the late ingenious Mr. *John Norris*, that he *hopes a very difficult Argument has lost Nothing by his Management* (b). But the Marks of the *Dean's* Arrogance are but very little more conceal'd, and less visible than these; and therefore can hardly be said to be less shocking; especially to any Man who thinks, as possibly some may think, they have less indisputable and solid Merit to support them.

The Dissenters indeed (a despis'd People) could expect no other, when so great a Man should condescend so low as to write against them, but to be set at the utmost Distance that Pride of Expression could contrive. And Mr. *Sykes* must not only be content to be told, but take it as a Favour that so friendly an Excuse is made for him; that however, he thought himself fit to be an Author, yet he wrote without *knowing any Thing of the Matter*. But who can with Patience see the *Dean's* Haughtiness

(a) *Epistle Dedicatory before his Essays.*

(b) *Charge of Schism.*

tiness, in the contemptuous Expressions he uses towards one, who, by the Favour of Providence, is made his Superior; and that both by his Station in the *Church*, and his Place among the *Peers* of the *Realm*. Here 'tis shameful to observe how much the *Dean* writes both out of Character, and out of Temper.

Even before my Lord had taken any particular Notice of him, or any farther Notice of the Convocation than barely to say he was preparing an Answer to the *Committee* (a), the *Dean* begins to express his Arrogance in the most unseemly Menaces. He gives the Bishop to know, that if he would pretend to justify his Sermon, he should find that he has a Matter of another Nature upon his Hands, than ever yet he was engaged in (b). And the Reason why his Lordship was to find it such hazardous and difficult Work to defend his Sermon, we may suppose was particularly this, because when his Lordship shall publish his Answer, the *Dean* will neither be afraid nor asham'd to own the Cause, and do the Work of the Church. I will take my Share in the common Defence of the Representation of the *Committee* in which I concurred. As ever therefore the Bishop would keep clear of so very formidable an Adversary, it concern'd him to lay aside all Thoughts of an Answer, and rest satisfied with the Chastizement he had, for Fear of worse. The same Air of Authority he had before put on, when considering himself

(a) *Answ. to Dr. Snape.*

(b) *Answer to a Letter sent to the Rev. Dr. Sherlock,*
p. 51, 53.

self no doubt, as speaking in the Name of the mighty *We* of the Convocation (*a*), he thus insults and threatens his Lordship: *He'll find that Something he must part with, and I heartily wish him the happier Choice.*

When, notwithstanding all 'those Threatnings, his Lordship pursu'd his Resolution of defending the Doctrines laid down in his Sermon, I know not whether the *Dean* discovers more plainly, a Meanness of Spirit in watching for any seeming Mistake in Expression, or Pride in insulting upon any such Appearance. In his *P. S.* to Mr. *Syke's* Second Letter, the *Bishop* had spoke of an Action as a Law of Christ, which perhaps is neither so unusual nor improper a Way of Speaking as the *Dean* would represent it: However, if the *Dean* had any Objection against it, he was free, to besure, to express his Dislike of it (*b*). But the Manner in which he does it, is worthy himself; and either above, or below any Man's Imitation. *You could not, my Lord, be accurate in the Language, if you would humour your Principle. There is a Reason and Philosophy even in Language, which some Doctrines cannot bear; as your Lordship will find, when you endeavour to justify the Expression, or support your Doctrine, without it. What Triumphs! What needless ill-grounded Triumphs are those? But this is generous Treatment, compar'd with the base Calumny which*

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(*a*) Answer to a Letter sent to the Rev. Dr. Sherlock, p. 18.

(*b*) Considerations, p. 19.

concludes his Discourse concerning *the Religion of Oaths* (a). He has made a shift there to represent a few Words of his Lordship in a disadvantageous Light; by tearing them from all the Limitations that lay round about them, and tacking a malicious Comment of his own to them; he has made them sound strangely shocking. The Calumny is sufficiently answer'd: But that which I would observe, is, the scandalous Use he proposes to make of this Quotation; which is not more to insult the Bishop as a rash unguarded Writer, than it is to prejudice all with whom his Judgment will weigh any thing, against all that the Bishop has publish'd, or may publish. I consider it in this Light, as a flagrant Instance of the vilest Cunning, and the most intolerable Insolence together. And I know of nothing that can add to it's native Deformity, or make it appear more odious than in itself it is, unless it be the Consideration of the very different Behaviour of the good Bishop on all like Occasions. You shall never see a Line of this Nature drop from his Pen, either under the greatest Provocations and Injuries, or upon a more than imaginary Victory. Fancy'd Conquests puff others up, and make others vaunt themselves; the most real and applauded Advantages cannot elate his Mind, or make him behave himself in any Respect unseemly. After he had fully refuted, and clear'd himself of, the Calumny, he adds, p. 21 of that Answer, 'As to the *Dean*, I assure the
' World,

(a) Page 116.

‘ World, that after having shewn how greatly
‘ he has injur’d me, it is my sincere Desire
‘ that *this* may not lay the least Prepossession
‘ in the Way of any *Reader*, towards any one
‘ *Argument* he makes use of. He may argue
‘ very well, tho’ he has used me very ill.
‘ I write this for my own necessary Vindi-
‘ cation, and not to hinder his Arguments
‘ from having all the Weight they ought to
‘ have.’ Here is Candour, Modesty and
Integrity, in an uncommon Degree: They need
no Foil to set them off: Tho’ every Part of
the *Dean’s* Conduct cannot but serve to make
them more conspicuous.

But besides these, there are other Methods,
which the *Dean* has, of expressing a wonderful
good Liking of himself, and his Performances.
I remember an Observation of my Lord
Bacon’s, which he borrows from *Pliny*, in his
Essay on Vain Glory; ‘ Among the Arts of
‘ Ostentation, there is none better than to
‘ be liberal of Praise and Commendation to
‘ others, in that wherein a Man himself hath
‘ any Perfection. For, saith *Pliny*, very wit-
‘ tily, in commending another you do your
‘ self right: For he that you commend, is
‘ either superiour to you in that you com-
‘ mend, or inferiour. If he be inferiour; if
‘ he be to be commended, you much more:
‘ If he be superiour; if he be not to be
‘ commended, you much less.’ By the help
of this Remark, ’tis pretty easy to understand,
and account for, the great Respect with which
the *Dean* once and again mentions *Dr. Snape*,
and his Writings. No Body, I dare say,
except the Persons themselves, ever suspected

him of Sincerity in commending the *Master of Eaton* (a) for an extensive Charity; and *Mr. Law* (b) for strong and unanswerable Reasoning, in his two Letters to the Bishop. But if he could persuade the World that *Dr. Snape*, after having asserted the Right of the Civil Magistrate to terrify and keep Men in awe in their religious Capacity, had, notwithstanding this, a becoming Measure of Good Will to Mankind, almost an Excess of Charity for Christians of a different Persuasion from his own; he might the more easily obtain Credit himself, for what he thought he had occasion soon after to add, that he could with a clear Mind say, he had ever pleaded against *Persecution*: Which could never otherwise have been believ'd, considering that it stands in the midst of an open publick Plea for negative Discouragements, and incapacitating Laws, on the Account of meer Religion. But if *Dr. Snape* has enough and to spare, *Dr. Sherlock* can hardly overvalue himself on the much more goodly Appearance he has of Charity. And if the *Dean* can induce us to take it upon his Word, that *Mr. Law's* loose Declamations are strong, and nervous, and convincing, he himself need never fear being esteem'd, what he calls *Mr. Law*, a very considerable Writer. For I am satisfy'd, from me he won't take it as a very high Compliment, if I tell him, that he writes, as I verily think he does, something better than *Mr. Law*, or *Dr. Snape* either.

Con-

(a) *Vind. of Corpor. and Test Acts*, p. 40.

(b) *Condit. and Examp. of our blessed Saviour*, &c. p. 62.

Contempt of others is a natural Attendant on Pride. An high Opinion of a Man's own Capacities will naturally lead to a mean one of other Peoples. And this makes the Sincerity of these Encomiums very doubtful, considering how natural and usual it is with the *Dean* to throw out disparaging Reflections on all with whom he has to do. A proud Author for ever fixes upon a disadvantageous Circumstance, to lessen the Credit and Esteem of any Man whom he has Occasion to mention. A younger Person at his first Appearance in the World, tho' with Modesty, and many Marks of clear Reason and fine Capacity, shall be turn'd off with Scorn, remitted to the *Ferula*, tauntingly reproach'd with officious meddling in a Matter of which he knows little. The Obscurity and Privacy of a Writer, which one would think should rather protect from Injury, shall be turn'd to a Disadvantage, and made a Reason of Insult: Tho' there are Circumstances, which may make it very justifiable or necessary to lie in the Shade, and the Reasons offer'd may be nevertheless weighty, and worthy of Regard; yet this shall be call'd wounding Men in the dark, and slaying Kings by a Bow drawn at a Venture. Then (a) they take the Advantage to attack the Reputation of others, without hazarding their own. Several obscure Persons of late have insulted Men of great Abilities and Worth, and taken Pleasure to pelt them from their Coverts with little Objections; tho', it seems, the ill Success of their Attempts has justified their Prudence in concealing themselves.

Mens

(a) Atterb. Pref. to Vol. of *Serm.*

Mens Capacities and Abilities, are represented as unequal to the Task, or unsuitably employ'd: Their peculiar Talents lye another Way, especially if they meddle with Subjects a little out of the Way, or are thought to invade another's Province; and they are put in Mind of *Horace's* Advice (a).

*Sumite Materiam vestris, qui Scribitis, equam
Viribus: & versate diu quid ferre recusent
Quid valeant Humeri.*

When Dr. *Bentley* had given his Opinion of the Axis of the Earth, and the Face of the Moon, in his Lectures against Atheism; Mr. *Keil* reproves him with this bitter Taunt (b):
‘It were to be wish’d, that great Criticks would
‘confine their Labours to their Lexicons, and
‘not venture to guess in those Parts of Learning, which are capable of Demonstration.”
The ingenious Mr. *Norris*, tells the *Athenian* Society, who had remarked upon his Notion of Ideas, and the Nature of Sin (c); *This it is, when Nature is not follow’d, when Science is usurp’d; when a Sort of Men, whose Talents were never known to lye much towards Philosophy, will turn a Conventicle into a Port Royal, and set up for Vertuoso’s.*

’Tis an Insolence, Scorn, and Contempt, no way inferior to any of these, that the Dean of *Chichester*, every where discovers, in his mentioning Mr. *Sykes*. Whenever he does vouchsafe to take any Notice of him, he would be understood

(a) *De Arte Pœtica.*

(b) *Keil's Exam. of Burnet's Theor. p. 70.*

(c) *At the End of his Disc. of the Beaut. p. 52.*

derstood to look down upon him with the utmost Disdain. He tells the Bishop, and unluckily in false *English* (a), *That he had as live teach Children to read, as answer Mr. S - - 's Letter : I wonder he thought it necessary to write, before he had any thing to say to the Purpose. If you like such a Second, my Lord, yet I must own to you, I don't like such a Correspondent* (b): *Nor can I imagine, what tempted your Lordship to put him to this Employment* (c). And in a later Piece, *If he would permit me to do him a good Office, I could very sincerely say, I believe he knew nothing of the Matter.*

And yet he appears to know more than the Dean thinks fit to answer; and in Spite of this Grimace, his uneasy Scorn, shews Mr. Sykes's Knowledge to be very troublesome to him; and would incline any Man to believe, that he would have lik'd him better for a Correspondent, had he found him less knowing.

But if they are Men of the greatest Merit and acknowledg'd Capacity; Skilful, and vers'd in Controversial Writing, known to be Masters of their Subject, the Pride of an Adversary will find Ways to humble them, by odious Comparison with other Writers; making them fall below themselves, and unequal to their former Performances; or representing them as beholden to others, who are below them. 'Tis with this View, the Letter in the *Flying Post*, Jan. 18 (d). ' is said to come from an able Hand, and to be writ in a Spirit very different,

erent, not only from the Paper in which it appears, but from that of the Bishop's own.' And the Bishop is said to have inserted his large Answer, at second Hand, from Mr. Sykes. Mr. Sykes had been all along represented in Terms of the utmost Contempt, as the worthless Second of his Lordship, and one that knows nothing of the Matter in Debate between the Bishop and the Dean. But now he is grown the Worthy Mr. Sykes. And the Bishop, it seems, is not only Second to Mr. Sykes, but has inserted great Part of his large Answer from him. This Mr. Sykes, is certainly a very lucky Person in this Controversy; for he has rose from the lowest Contempt of the Dean, unfit to be employ'd as the Bishop's Second, to a Place Superior to the Bishop himself; and of a Second is commenced a Principal. The Bishop and He have shifted Places, and he has had his Turn of being, for the same Reasons, an equal Object of the greatest Scorn, and Esteem.

There is a Piece of Conduct in Controversial Writers, which hath a Mixture of much Pride; with some Stratagem in it; when, with an Air, that is very assuming and confident, they wholly overlook an Adversary, and neglect his Arguments. It is a Condescension in an Author of Quality, to instruct his Inferiors; but to controvert any thing with them, wou'd be a Scourge upon that Honour; that they can't think of without Indignation. This was the Way, the present Bishop of Rochester took to answer Benjamin Hoadly. He gave out, that his Adversary was a Trifler, and his Arguments were only of neglect. The Party were ready enough to take it on his Word; and among other things, perhaps, his Reputation and Principles were

